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ABSTRACT

This special issue of a quarterly newsletter describes a number of approaches to staff development in adult basic education and English-as-a-Second-Language programs being practiced in New York City. It includes an editorial about the necessity of making the resource commitment to provide full-time jobs and decent health coverage for staff. "Collaborative Work Groups: A Strategy for Staff and Program Development" (Griswold) describes staff development experiences in three literacy programs in New York City and identifies essential elements. "Staff Development at the Riverside Adult Learning Center: An Interview with Phyllis Berman and Leslie Robbins" (Pleune) presents an integrated and comprehensive staff development model used in a program that has full- and part-time staff and operates at several sites. In "Reflections on the Literacy Assistance Center's ESOL Institute Follow-Up" (Freeman), an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) institute and the follow-up plan for participants are described. "Professionalization of the Adult Literacy Work Force: A Practitioner's Review & Comments" (Brown) examines the Southport Institute for Policy Analysis report on professionalization and argues for all practitioners to support the infrastructure and resources necessary for the creation of an adult literacy profession. "Demonstration Classes at the City University of New York" (Meyers) shows how ESOL demonstration classes provide an opportunity for observation of teaching techniques, use of materials, and classroom management. "Teacher to Teacher: A Video Training Series" lists 12 titles in a video training series and provides ordering information. "The LAC Clearinghouse: It's More Than Just a Bunch of Books" (Rabideau) describes the Literacy Assistance Center's clearinghouse activities. A staff development questionnaire and a description of the Literacy Preparation Task Force conclude the document. (CML)

Information Update

Literacy Assistance Center, Inc.

March 1989

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FROM THE EDITOR

Staff development comes in a variety of shapes and forms -- from conferences, workshops and institutes, to staff meetings, classroom observations, informal dialogue with colleagues, or participation in a college course or certificate program.

This issue of *Information Update* will offer descriptions of several staff development resources available to practitioners, and will also present a number of approaches to staff development being practiced in New York City which programs may wish to adapt for their own use.

Hopefully, this issue will also further the discussion of teaching conditions in the field. Adult literacy instruction is currently being provided largely by part time staff; individuals who often hold down full-time positions outside the field or in a related education discipline, or those who patch together several part-time positions in adult literacy and elsewhere to earn a living wage.

There are many who are interested in entering the field, and indeed, the need for qualified adult literacy teachers is expanding as government, industry and the general public begin to recognize the personal, social and economic implications of an undereducated populace. But many who might wish to invest in further education or training, and who might otherwise make a commitment to the field, cannot afford to do so. The full-time positions, accompanied by professional salaries and decent benefits, are just not there to attract them. Nor, for that matter, are the conditions in place to keep those already working in adult literacy. The ability to organize, implement and make accessible further education and training for adult literacy practitioners depends, to a large extent, on the willingness of funders, policy makers and practitioners themselves to work toward a more coherent employment structure for adult literacy professionals. Certainly we

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SPECIAL ISSUE

ON

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

CE 055 306

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Collaborative Work Groups: A Strategy for Staff and Program Development

by Karen Griswold

The best staff development I've experienced has often taken place in contexts other than what we generally consider "staff development activities." To be sure, I've learned a lot from participating in workshops, attending institutes, hearing speakers, and reading articles. But I think I've learned the most from ongoing discussion and work with groups of other teachers and administrators founded on a specific program issue or concern. Most of these groups have been within the context of the program I was working with at the time; occasionally I've been a part of ongoing groups involving several programs.

I've been fortunate to participate in work like this in several programs. In this article I'd like to present a few snapshots of these group experiences and why they seemed to be a powerful means of both staff and program development.

Moving Toward Small Group Instruction at Literacy Volunteers of New York City

I remember a group of us grappling with moving from one-to-one tutoring to small group tutoring at Literacy Volunteers about ten years ago. As we started to have increasing numbers of discussion groups with students and tutors at program sites, several of us began to question whether the structure of our current program reflected what we believed about education. We were increasingly feeling that one-to-one tutoring often made it difficult for students to learn from each other. Although we wanted to introduce small group tutoring, we hoped to do it in a way that would be inviting to both students and tutors already in one-to-one tutoring and which would also give us a chance to examine some of the questions that might arise. We wondered, for example, should the program have only small group tutoring, or both one-to-one and small group instruction? Who would decide what kind of instruction was appropriate?

We introduced small group instruction slowly by trying out some topic-based reading and writing groups led by current volunteers who were interested in group instruction, and inviting interested students already in one-to-one tutoring to join this additional instruction. Throughout the process, we met regularly, talked about how the groups were going, discussed what issues were coming up for participating students and tutors, and figured out how we as staff could best support the small groups. As a result of this experience, we redesigned the workshop for tutors so that people learned strategies for both small group and one-to-one tutoring. We also made the decision not to force existing tutoring pairs into small group instruction unless they were interested. Rather, we decided to have small groups begin with new students and tutors, and hoped that the interest would build.

The group of us who met could discuss our own experiences with small group instruction at our tutoring sites. The collective knowledge about small group instruction was far greater than any one of us would have had individually, enabling us to extend our thinking. In addition, we had help in working through some of the critical issues in this kind of program change.

Increasing Student Participation in Workshops at the Centers for Reading and Writing

At the Centers for Reading and Writing at the New York Public Library, new students had been attending the 18-hour orientation workshop along with new volunteers so volunteers could have some practical experience trying out what they were learning. Although this model had worked quite successfully for volunteers, some of us were uneasy with the way in which we had asked students to participate. Students attended some of the practice sessions during the workshop, and did quite a bit of reading and writing along with the group, but were not included in the theoretical

discussions of reading and writing. They also did not have the same opportunity as tutors to reflect on their learning through discussion after the practice sessions.

Our uneasiness, I think, was informed by what we were seeing -- students seemed reluctant to leave the workshop at the break and often asked us about what went on after they left. At the same time, several of us were reading and thinking about the importance of community in literacy learning, and the importance of viewing literacy in a social context. We began to see a contradiction between how we were asking our tutors to teach and the model we were using in these initial workshop sessions.

We worked together to figure out ways that students, tutors, and the staff people leading the workshop could participate in reading and writing together. We gave everyone journals at the first session, for example, and had people write about some of the things they hoped to get from the program, and some of the things they were worried about--suggesting some ways around not being able to spell a particular word in writing. We asked both students and tutors to select books, and to read and discuss them with each other. The discussion of ways to teach reading and writing in the workshop also included both students and tutors. And finally, groups of students and tutors each met with a staff member several times during the course of the six-session workshop to reflect on their learning and to discuss concerns they might not want to bring up in the larger group.

These changes happened gradually at various sites, with staff people adapting the workshop according to their own teaching styles, but with a commitment to a shared philosophy of learning and teaching. We struggled with aspects of the workshop that we felt were important. How could we present the ideas of an interactive model of reading comprehension in ways that were accessible to students and tutors? Was there a respectful way of including difficult reading material--such as articles on reading and writing--in a group where some people could not read them. How could we best support very beginning students in the workshop--students who might not be able to get even the first letter of a word down on paper in their writing. Questions like this continued to trouble us, and through our ongoing discussions we were able to address them.

ABE Curriculum Group at the Adult Learning Center at Lehman

At Lehman, I participate with a group of five other ABE teachers who meet once a week to talk about our classes. In the group, which started several weeks ago, we share strategies and materials, and we talk about different ways to approach reading and writing. Hearing from people who tend to use more thematically related social studies material, for example, has made me think more about the importance of the class having a larger amount of shared content to read and write about. I also know I can get help with the many requests for math instruction I'm getting in the class; there are people in the group who've taught math in several different ways. On the other hand, I can offer my own experience in helping beginning writers work on an extended piece of writing over time; an area which interests some of the other teachers.

In addition to sharing strategies and supporting each other, the group provides a window for seeing beyond the one class I teach. Since the group consists of several people with different schedules and responsibilities -- some full-time and some part-time -- the group provides us a larger picture of the program, as well as a sense of community.

Elements of Effective Staff Development Groups

Although these are different experiences in different contexts, they all share some common elements that made them good learning experiences for me, and I suspect, for the other staff members who participated:

- In each of the groups, the staff people participating had a shared interest in the issue. These shared concerns came from regular contact with each other and with our students. We often discussed program issues, exchanged articles, and talked about our work. Projects emerged from some of the themes in these discussions.

- People working on a project participated voluntarily and felt as though the issue being discussed was important to them. Although I think there may occasionally be a place for *required* staff development, people generally learn the most when they have a desire to

participate and an interest in the issue.

• All of these groups met regularly over a fairly long period of time. This gave us a chance to talk, do some reading and writing about the issue, try out some of our ideas in the program, and reflect on our learning. We could also make program changes on a small scale, observe the changes, and discuss what we found out at each stage in the process.

• The groups included both experienced and less experienced staff people. This had two advantages. On the one hand, having people with considerable knowledge about the field helped the newer staff people gain a sense of the history of the program, and a broader context for looking at the particular issue we were discussing. On the other, people with less of a history in the field sometimes look at issues differently and add a fresh viewpoint.

• Each of these groups had either direct decision making power for the issue involved or the ability to make recommendations to another group within the program where they were sure their suggestions would be considered seriously. This gave us the freedom to try out our ideas as we were working through them. We also knew that we wouldn't be in the position of spending a good deal of time on major program changes that couldn't be implemented.

• People involved in these projects were predominantly full-time staff people who had the ability to be together in the same place at the same time. Full-time people in different locations were scheduled with common time to meet together each week.

Certainly there are many opportunities in New York City to attend presentations and workshops, and to share ideas with each other. I welcome these opportunities, and hope that these continue to increase. But I don't think an increase in the number of workshops and other events is enough to provide staff people with the best possible way of extending their knowledge. Nor do I think the answer lies in the development of coursework leading toward certification and an attempt to make the route into adult literacy education more similar to that of teaching in the public schools.

Instead, we need to give some serious thought to how teachers and administrators learn, and how programs develop. One way, it seems to me, is by providing an opportunity within programs, and *across* programs for people to work together on projects that affect instruction and/or program design. An exploration, for example, of ways to broaden the kinds of student participation in a program might involve students, teachers, and administrators. Another group looking at ways to use poetry in the classroom might initially be most comfortable involving only teachers. Two programs interested in expanding their work in AIDS education might consider students, teachers, and administrators from both programs.

Unfortunately, at many programs, this type of ongoing work is difficult or impossible, largely because most of the teaching staff is part-time. At the Centers for Reading and Writing, for example, we were fortunate in having predominantly full-time staff and time set aside for committees, meetings, and projects each Friday morning. But even then, our part-time teachers--who were extremely interested in the projects we were working on--could seldom join us because of other work commitments. They lost out on the opportunity to feel part of a larger program and participate in our ongoing work; we lost out as a program by not having their expertise and opinions.

I'm aware that the libraries are comparatively fortunate in having a large number of full-time staff members. And the decisions needed to make ongoing collaborative work possible elsewhere are difficult both at the program level and the funding level. The choices to be made are not often clear. Sometimes the same amount of money could either hire a part-time teacher to serve 15 additional students or enable an existing staff member teaching two or three classes to become full-time, but serve no additional students as a result. Yet, neither students nor teachers ultimately benefit from continued expansion without an understanding that a *commitment to teachers is, in a real sense, a commitment to students*.

I think we need to acknowledge that attendance at an occasional workshop is not enough for most of us to learn and grow. Ideally, a program would consist entirely of full-time people who would have substantial teaching responsibilities, but also time to

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Staff Development at the Riverside Adult Learning Center
An Interview with Phyllis Berman and Leslie Robbins

Staff development at the Riverside Adult Learning Center is an integral part of the teaching experience, and occurs in many forms. Yet the concept of sharing and expanding is at the heart of the variety of staff development activities. Riverside has made a number of decisions in terms of staff, staff development activities and monies that make it somewhat different from most of the programs in the city.

Phyllis: One of the things that's rare about our program, and it's a choice we made early on, is that everyone at the Riverside site works full-time. (There are classes at library sites where teachers are part-time.) So people aren't caught between this job and 17 others. There is time for people to share, to really develop from each other, and that's tremendously important.

Only skilled teachers are hired at Riverside, particularly teachers who have graduated from Teachers College or the School for International Training where a practicum is part of the curriculum. It's not enough to have a master's degree. A new teacher must also come recommended and with classroom experience.

Phyllis: We deliberately choose people who come from programs which are not just theoretical, and we choose people who are recommended by the faculty of those programs.

Leslie: Because we hire people who are skilled, we're competing with the salaries offered by the City University. *(Leslie refers here to the credit area of CUNY.)* Our salaries don't begin to match theirs. One of the reasons that teachers come to us is because of the kinds of staff development that we offer. One of our teachers said that last year she taught at CUNY as an adjunct while keeping her full-time job with us. She said that CUNY's adjunct position enabled her to earn money, but that Riverside provided her an opportunity for professional development. The staff development is particularly crucial for us so we can attract and keep people who could be earning better salaries elsewhere. They see what we do as professional growth for them.

As a financial incentive, Riverside has added into the salary of everybody on staff a small amount of money to be used towards staff development time and expenses. In addition to in-house staff development, teachers are expected to obtain at least 20 hours of staff development in the course of the academic year.

Phyllis: Leslie and I never tell people what they should do to get those 20 hours. We have enough respect for people to expect that they can choose what's important for them, what they feel that they need. We ask them to project at the beginning what they think they're going to do as a means of getting staff development, and close to the end of the year we ask them what they've done. A number of people on our staff this year have gotten some specific training on AIDS so that they can come back into the classrooms and do AIDS conversations. Even our non-teaching staff gets staff development. One of our secretaries, her staff development this year is studying Mandarin - she speaks Cantonese.

Much staff development occurs during working hours. Teachers spend a lot of time observing one another. If a teacher's class is in a workshop or if her students are working independently, she has the opportunity to go and observe other teachers in the school.

Phyllis: We think that's one of the best ways that staff can get staff development, because they see people who are in similar situations, who are also very skilled, and they get ideas from watching someone else whose experience is not so different from their own. It works both ways because the person being observed is also getting staff development in terms of the feedback they get, feedback that they're getting from a peer. That has particular value to them. It's not only the watching person who learns, it's the person being watched who learns because we talk afterwards about what we see.

We put a lot of stock in observation and conversation as one of the main ways in which teachers can get staff development. And so we find a million different ways in which teachers can do that for themselves and with other people.

Leslie: We've got two people from the School for International Training at Brattleboro who are in master's training programs and they are working with two of our full-time teachers. They're assigned to them for a period of eight weeks as part of the SIT graduate students' training. But it is also staff development for our teachers; development in the sense that they have an observer in the classroom every single day and it's staff development in the sense that they're learning about teacher training, not only about teaching, because they're very much involved in the training of someone who may be new to the classroom.

Besides visiting one another's classes, teachers at Riverside participate in a variety of other staff development activities, some of which are done as part of the normal work day and some of which are done at other times and covered in the staff development stipend.

Ten times a year teachers participate in an all-staff meeting. Although a portion of the all-staff meeting is relegated to administrative issues, almost all meetings have some portion devoted to teaching-related issues.

Additionally, 1/2 to 2/3rds of the teachers at Riverside are involved in observing other teachers in their role as library coordinators at the New York Public Libraries in the evenings. These teachers work full-time at Riverside during the day, but in the evening they work as coordinators at particular library sites. So, although a part of their job is to bring the values of the Riverside Adult Learning Center to teachers at the library sites, these coordinators also get to observe a lot of teachers. Teachers who work as library coordinators get to observe a much wider range of teachers than they do at Riverside.

Teachers at Riverside are also involved in much outside staff development.

Phyllis: About half of our teaching staff is participating this year in the Literacy Assistance Center's ESL teacher training project. Although they're supposedly the quote "master teachers," in which they're being visited by new teachers, they're also doing visiting. Again, there's an emphasis on observation and conversation as one of the main ways in which teachers can get staff development. A number of teachers at Riverside took a week-long training in integrative learning. There are always such things each year, and our staff are *always* interested. Our people go to the New York City ABE Conference, the New York State TESOL Conference, and the national TESOL Conference. They also go to workshops that are offered around the city. They're likely to study at Educational Solutions or do something in Counseling Learning. Also, teachers from our staff are often presenters. Although people usually think of staff development only as something you go to as a learner, there is a lot of staff development when you present, because you master the things that you feel you have some expertise in when you have to transfer that to somebody else. And also you get the teacher-training experience which for many of the people on our staff is the next level up from where they are.

Leslie: There's one other area in staff development. I'm not sure how it came about, but we always seem to have a research project that we're involved in. Over the past few years, we've picked a topic and met together on a fairly regular basis to read the research or to read the materials connected with it. Assessment was the topic this year. Right now that has evolved into a new plan that we have for doing a more student-centered language assessment, where students will assess themselves. But first we did a lot of reading about testing and assessment in general and ESL testing in particular; stuff that you would not ordinarily read about if you were not in a graduate program. A few years ago we did Paulo Freire, empowerment in learning. Each year a topic has evolved that people are interested in. In a sense it's become like a graduate seminar. We choose the materials and talk about them together. Often it leads to another stage of "so what does this mean for us here in the school."

The Riverside Adult Learning Center, in addition to its full-time program, is responsible for the ESOL classes at 16 branches of the New York Public Library. Teachers in the

library programs are part-time, and, in general, are not as experienced as teachers at Riverside. While many of the library teachers have masters' degrees, they are often from institutions which do not provide practical training, or the teacher might be in the midst of getting a master's degree from Teacher's College. Library staff are paid to attend four staff meetings a year, which provide a total of ten hours of staff development. These meetings are apt to have teacher-centered topics -- about testing, about teaching different levels, etc.

In addition to the staff meetings, library teachers must attend three mid-cycle meetings a year, meetings in which teachers share a lot about what's going on for them in the classroom. The mid-cycle meetings are really group meetings with anywhere from four to six teachers present. At these meetings, teachers give presentations on some aspect of teaching that they do really well. Phyllis feels that teachers who may not be skilled in every area usually have something that they do well. Coordinators have worked with one or more of the library teachers in an area in which the teacher is really competent.

Leslie: I have to say I saw a teacher I thought was not very experienced do a presentation on something that was quite brilliant. The coordinator was able to work with the teacher in identifying a skill and helping the teacher to make the presentation.

The questions teachers ask each other about these presentations are much different from questions they would ask a coordinator. No matter how supportive a coordinator tries to be, she is viewed as an evaluator.

The teachers in the library program also are required to do some observation, either at Riverside or in the library program. This observation is uncompensated and on the teacher's own time. Teachers are also advised of staff development activities going on in the city, but are not required to attend.

Phyllis feels that the question of staff development is directly tied to the issue of money for staff development.

Phyllis: One thing I want to say, and I think this is true for all program directors, the question of staff development is directly tied to money. In the library program, teachers were paid for the staff meetings, paid just as if they were teaching. We consider that just as important as their teaching, and they're fully paid for it in the same way. At the Riverside site, at least twenty hours of staff development are provided from our ten staff meetings, and the teachers are already paid for that. Additionally, the expectation is that they are going to get at least another twenty hours beyond their paid time, and we don't expect that they're going to do that wholly on their own time. What we're giving them is something like half of their hourly pay for each hour that they put in outside. It really should be a good amount higher than that. It should be a one-hour to one- hour type of computation. If programs expect people to stretch themselves, they've got to pay them. I think the message to program directors is that if you value this, you have to budget it. You can't expect that teachers will, out of the goodness of their heart, do certain things when they're so underpaid to begin with. I may be saying something that I'll be sorry for, but that means that out of a 200 hour class, we may cancel five hours in order to pay those teachers. Out of a 60-hour library cycle, we may cancel five hours. The money has to come from someplace, and it is being taken from someplace, but we value staff development. It makes the hours that a teacher is teaching more valuable. Teacher morale, teacher development, teacher ability to move, and professional skills that get developed here are part of what make the job worthwhile. Part-time programs especially need staff development. Teachers feel alienated, they have no opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Unless the program provides an opportunity to do the sharing, you can't expect growth.

Literacy Assistance Center's Referral Hotline

(212) 267-5309

Monday through Friday

Reflections on the LAC's ESOL Institute Follow-up

by Deidre Freeman

Deidre Freeman is part of a year-long staff development project sponsored by the Literacy Assistance Center in which ten participants of the LAC's June 1988 ESOL Institute have been paired with ten experienced "partner-teachers" who are learning from one another through a series of six classroom observation exchanges and attendance at two full-day workshops held at the beginning and end of the project year. Phyllis Berman, Co-Director of the Riverside Adult Learning Center, conducted the June '88 Institute and is a consultant working with Mae Dick on the follow-up plan. In a letter to Phyllis and Mae, Deidre describes her experience with the project.

Dear Mae and Phyllis:

I wanted to write and let you know how pleased I am to be a participant in the ESOL Institute Follow-up both from the perspective of a teacher and a curriculum/staff developer. The Institute last June was especially helpful for me in that it provoked much reflection and posed possible avenues for making some changes. Being able to participate in the follow-up has allowed me to begin to work on some of the issues which surfaced at the Institute, and others which continue to emerge.

It's interesting for me to think back on the first time I was observed. It was my first year teaching ESL and I was teaching a beginning level course. (I had no formal background in education or ESL.) The day of the observation I was extremely nervous and the class knew it. The way I approached the lesson that night was the same way I usually did: to make sure all present in the room participated. So we welcomed the administrator's presence and whirled off on a review of possessive adjectives and articles of clothing and utilized the presence of another English speaker (the observer) in the classroom.

When I read the evaluation (there was no immediate discussion following the observation), it was as "good" as one could have hoped for, but I wasn't satisfied. I wanted something more. Perhaps at that point I didn't realize what I needed, but in retrospect a constructive dialogue would have helped a lot--if only for that format's inherent characteristics of asking and being asked questions. This would have provoked self-reflection and, in turn, would have allowed me to build on my teaching experience.

From a teacher's perspective, my participation in the ESOL Institute Follow-up has created the time to examine (in a non-threatening situation), some of the questions which I have about my own teaching. Lindsay Pearson, my partner-teacher, has been both supportive of the work I do in the classroom and constructive in her questions and comments. Rather than feel intimidated by having another person in the classroom with me, I see it as a time in which to feel things out, to look at where I need work and get another person's perspective on how to approach some of those things. I don't expect answers but rather to see new possibilities.

That discrepancy between what I thought an observation could be and what actually took place in my first observation affected how I would later deal with observing teachers myself. I couldn't imagine going into someone else's classroom now, observing and leaving without a discussion. But, how to begin this conversation, especially without "telling" a teacher what you think s/he should do?

The system Lindsay and I use to observe each other's class is a simple one. We speak the evening before the observation, discuss what's going on in the class and decide what in particular the other will focus on in the observation. After we had been to each other's classes the first time, the conversation became a time to see how the other person was doing since the last visit. In both of our cases, we began our first visits by focusing the observation on the teacher. (This established focus was flexible.) The next time, we focused on students and also on any specific questions which either of us was working on at the time.

After the observation, we usually speak briefly and follow it up by a longer conversation--over the phone or in person. Though we have been more spontaneous than scientific in our follow-up conversations, they have always begun with the person who was

observed talking about her class. I believe that there are many ways of going about this follow-up conversation. It depends on those involved. (It might be good to brainstorm the options more clearly for future projects.)

As a result of my experience with the Institute follow-up, I have concretized other ideas for filling in the theoretical gap between observing and follow-up. In this case, I have learned how to go into a classroom and remain an objective observer. It's very difficult not to get distracted by something which relates to your own teaching. The first time I went to Lindsay's class, I became aware of all the things that I was not doing in my class. I struggled to stay on course--observing Lindsay--and found it to be easier once I had already been there. Though not the same situation, I also realized the implications of involving the observer in one's class. It makes observing more difficult than it already is.

Getting the teacher to speak about what s/he has done in the classroom has created the springboard necessary for the post-observation conference. Neither of us had a problem doing that, so it worked out just fine. So far in my work observing other teachers, it has also worked well. Other situations established early on in the Follow-up Institute such as the recommendation that you not ask your partner-teacher to tell you what to do in the classroom, have been helpful but not always possible to do. There are some situations where you are curious to know how the other person would have handled the situation, if only just to get a different perspective on it. It's also difficult to immediately escape the judgement factor which is omnipresent in this society.

In many respects, observing and being observed has helped to reinforce my intuitive sense that an observation does not have to be threatening, one-way, judgmental feedback, but rather can be a constructive and participatory dialogue for both the observee and the observer. Granted, the presence of another person in the classroom still causes some reaction (fear, nerves, anticipation). However, one knows what to expect in this setting.

Up to this point I have only mentioned the more synthesized parts of an ongoing process. In part, this is due to the teacher I was paired with, as we work well together. Like any new situation, there have been a few awkward moments and questions about all of this. I have mentioned many of them. For the most part, there was support to discuss questions or problems with my partner-teacher or others involved in the Follow-up. (In retrospect, it would have been interesting to have met with others in the larger group once within this seven month period.) It is an excellent idea for any program's staff development plans.

I look forward to seeing both of you soon.

Fondly,
Deidre

COLLABORATIVE *(continued from page 4)*

participate in the ongoing work of the program. Not only does such an arrangement benefit the program, it provides additional opportunities for people to make adult literacy a career. Full-time work with reasonable salary levels and benefits would make adult literacy work a more desirable career choice. The program, in turn, can then do more than provide instruction to students. Projects can be initiated which not only improve the program but also contribute to the field. In addition, though, an experienced full-time staff can incorporate some less experienced people from time to time, and provide an opportunity for them to learn about the field in a supportive atmosphere. Programs, then, can provide a rich educational experience for new as well as experienced staff. Rethinking the purposes and strategies for staff development can provide broader opportunities for staff and program growth.

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Professionalization of the Adult Literacy Workforce
A Practitioner's Review & Comments
by Linda Brown

Those of us who labor in the vineyards of Adult Basic Eduction--that is, we who teach the classes, and take subways at night between Brooklyn and the Bronx to get to our students -- often have complicated feelings about educational consultants who are hired to investigate and write about adult literacy. In my own case, the two dominant emotions are envy and anger: envy, because it must be interesting to be able to see different programs and practitioners, and flattering to have one's opinion so valued that people are willing to *pay* for it; and anger, because so often research about what we do either restates the completely obvious, or results in a document which almost no one reads and which soon disappears without a trace. Since there is often not enough money for necessities, like books or a photocopy machine, in many programs, it frequently seems that money spent for yet another report could have been better used elsewhere.

The Southport Institute for Policy Analysis, based in Southport, Connecticut, commissioned seven papers on the topic of Adult Literacy in the U.S.A. in an attempt to develop an "in-depth understanding of various issues and perspectives bearing on the federal role in promoting adult literacy" (from the Foreword). One of these papers, *Professionalization of the Adult Literacy Workforce* by Susan E. Foster, will be discussed here. The money spent in the preparation of this report was not wasted, and I hope that it will not meet the usual fate of such papers--that it will not merely be read by a handful of us who care about the subject and then be forgotten. It is a clearly written and useful document; Ms. Foster's general remarks about the current state of training and support for both teachers and literacy program administrators are comprehensive and accurate.

To give an idea of both the style and the substance of the paper, I would like to quote from various sections:

"The job of helping individuals enhance their literacy skills is a formidable one--one that requires skill and training on the part of the instructor and takes a long time to accomplish. It is not a task that can be accomplished by a national cadre of untrained workers, no matter how well-intended. It is not a task that can be accomplished by volunteers alone. It is not a task that can be accomplished by simply extending the responsibilities of our elementary and secondary education system. In particular, this task cannot be accomplished solely by infusing the existing system of literacy providers with additional funds." (page 2)

"In the array of literacy programs operating today, there is no agreement on what constitutes adequate training. Even if agreement were reached among practitioners, there is no support structure available to provide or even permit much training to be done...Programs are operating on shoestring budgets. In most cases, programs are not required to provide training for their staffs. The demand for literacy services is compelling; time off and resources devoted to training would require reductions in service, so program administrators and funders choose to expand services before providing training for service-delivery personnel. In-service training and skill enhancement are most often done on the instructor's own time and expense."(page 6)

"Jobs are overwhelmingly part-time with no benefits and with no opportunities to build a career. No incentives exist for employees to commit themselves to upgrading their skills... Even if they were inclined to make adult education a career, programs are not now organized to offer them full-time employment or advancement in a field." (page 12)

"In order to advance the state of the art, we must build a profession." (page 14)

The paper can be divided into three sections:

- an overview describing various kinds of programs and defining what the task is
- an analysis of what is missing in current programs, and what questions about

professional development have not even been asked

- recommendations, which are not directed toward us in the field, but are intended for funders and government representatives

As is often the case, the first two sections are the strongest, because it is easier to describe what exists and what is clearly missing than it is to make concrete suggestions about how to change a nationwide system which is fractionated, receives monies from different sources, reports to different agencies, and includes many different methods of teaching and evaluating success. Ms. Foster is measured in her approach, and walks a number of fine lines very successfully. For example, while she states more than once that we can no longer rely primarily on volunteers and caring but untrained teachers, she is careful to credit the people who have been doing the work--"Literacy providers are often highly dedicated individuals working under adverse circumstances." (page 1) She is also careful to say that , while pre-service and in-service training are desperately needed, no single approach or traditional series of teacher-training courses can be recommended. She appreciates diversity, but feels that it must be within a framework -- not the diversity of "anything goes" because no one really knows or has investigated how to train teachers of adults -- but the diversity that naturally results when different people make informed choices based on reliable research and information. She is clear about not being interested in credentialling as a means of keeping people out of the field, but says again and again that far too few teachers and administrators have access to such information about teaching as we already *do* have.

Ms. Foster discusses the two major directions taken by adult literacy programs--either preparing people for the GED (high school equivalency exam) even though that may be a long way in their future, with the assumption that the basic skills learned can be transferred to learning for jobs -- or narrowing the focus of instruction to the immediate life situations and needs of the learner, "once again optimistically assuming that the learned skills can be generalized to other aspects of life." (page 16) She suggests a third approach that I did not fully understand: she calls for an emphasis on "portable skills" which she defines as "problem-solving or information-processing skills. . .imparted in a functional context." (page 16) This sounds reasonable, but it is hard for me to conceptualize what "portable skills" actually are if they are not the abilities to read and write at a level of sophistication such that one has both the confidence and the skill to use these abilities in various academic, work and personal situations. I wish specific examples of "portable skills" had been given. Her recommendations to policy makers are, briefly:

1. More money from the federal government.

2. A research base, easily accessible to administrators and teachers, defining what practices and approaches work better than others.

3. An emphasis on "portable skills."

4. Institutionalized opportunities for staff development, built into grant funding, and full-time jobs and career paths for teachers and administrators.

5. A change in the rhetoric about adult literacy, which currently perpetuates the myth that "anyone can teach another to be literate." (page 21)

This is a useful report, and as a first step toward seeing that it does not disappear into oblivion, I urge you to send for a copy.

Once we are in possession of good, useable information, we need to lobby any government representatives we have access to, to take adult literacy seriously and not to treat it as an afterthought.

All too frequently we assume that almost *anyone* is qualified to provide adult literacy services. This assumption continues to harm us all. The year 2000 is now being bandied about as the year by which adult illiteracy should be eliminated. We know that for the time being that is not going to happen, because literacy is so closely linked to class, income, racial segregation and the quality of public schools that unless we have taken care of all of the problems in these areas by the start of the next millennium, we will still be *(Cont.on page 14)*

Demonstration Classes at the City University of New York

by Cliff Meyers

A demonstration class involves an experienced or "master" teacher opening his/her classroom so that other teachers may come in and observe. While workshops, discussions, articles and evaluations are all useful as staff development, demonstration classes offer teachers a unique opportunity to see how the various components of teaching a good lesson come together. Watching another teacher in action gives one a chance to observe teaching techniques, student/teacher interaction, materials usage, classroom management, and teaching style.

At the City University of New York Adult Literacy Program, ongoing demonstration classes are taught by Cliff Meyers and Linda Brown, ESL and ABE Staff Development Coordinators. Both classes are part of New York City Technical College's Adult Literacy Program, and meet three times a week. The classes, one in BE and one in ESOL, are mixed levels I and II. CUNY teachers are encouraged to observe these classes as often as possible, and are reimbursed for their time. While the door is always open, calling to arrange the visit is suggested. Teachers can then request particular activities, skill areas or topics which they would most like to observe, and the class can be structured accordingly. The visiting teachers may participate in the class to varying degrees, and the atmosphere is informal. The following questions are given to visitors to offer some focus and structure to the observation and follow-up discussion:

- How is the classroom arranged?
- Where are the students physically during the class?
- Where is the teacher physically during the class?
- Throughout the class, what percent of the time are the students talking/reading/writing?
- Throughout the class, what percent of the time is the teacher talking?
- How does the teacher get students to work together?
- How does the teacher handle corrections?
- How many different activities does the teacher present during the class?
- How does the teacher prepare students for a new activity?
- What skills does an activity focus on?
- What do students do (steps or process) throughout an activity?
- What and how are materials used?
- Were the materials appropriate (level and interest)?
- How is the blackboard used?
- Would you use any of these activities? Why or why not?

A second type of demonstration class involves the staff developers going out to a site and teaching someone else's class. This gives teachers a chance to observe new ways of working with their own students. It is also ideal for those teachers who do not have time to visit the regular demonstration classes.

This demonstration class can take one of three forms. In the first, the staff developer steps in and teaches for the entire class period. A variety of activities and a sense of pacing can be demonstrated. Other teachers at the site can arrange to drop in and observe for short periods throughout the class. In the second, the teacher teaches the first half of the class and the staff developer takes over for the second. While this does require good communication beforehand, there are benefits. By observing first, the staff developer can regulate his/her teaching to complement the style and needs of the teacher. In the third, the teacher and the staff developer plan a lesson together and observe each other teach. After the lesson, the team evaluates their teaching and plans for follow-up.

While these forms of demonstration classes can be very powerful, there are inherent dangers. The prospect of a "master" teacher who zooms in, teaches the socks off the students and leaves, can be unsettling. The following guidelines can be useful for both teachers and staff developers to consider:

1) Don't "perform." Simple activities,

(continued on page 14)

Teacher to Teacher: A Video Training Series

The City University of New York is pleased to announce the completion of the 12-part video training series, **Teacher to Teacher**. The series presents effective approaches to teaching Basic Education and English as a Second Language to adults. The lessons are taught by experienced teachers representing New York City's literacy providing agencies and demonstrate the content and structure of actual classroom lessons.

The teaching represents a variety of styles and strategies unique to each of the individual teachers, yet the instruction as a whole rests on several beliefs that the teachers hold in common. Among these beliefs are:

- the experiences of the adult learners and their needs and interests should provide the basis for instruction;
- the teacher's role is frequently one of facilitator or coach -- stepping back and allowing the students to manage much of their own learning;
- the process of getting to know the students is continuous, beginning at the initial intake interview and going on for as long as the student is in the program;
- students have a great deal to learn from each other and should often work together in small groups or pairs; and
- different activities will be effective with different students. Providing several activities in a given class session means a greater chance of success for everybody.

Teacher to Teacher was created by teachers, for teachers, to share their expertise, provide inspiration and celebrate the richness and diversity of approaches among the teachers in New York City's adult learning community.

THE TAPES

"Teaching Reading Two Ways: The Tired and the True." Jean Bodman demonstrates a traditional way of conducting an ESL reading lesson and then a better way.

"Love to Write: Creating an Environment for Writers." Marilyn Boutwell works with basic literacy students who are helping each other develop their writing skills.

"Chapter 1, Page 1: Beginning Reading for Adults." Linda Brown illustrates activities designed to reach and teach the adult beginning reader.

"Every Student Has a Story: Developing a Community of Learners." Suzanne Carothers demonstrates the first step in planning effective instruction--getting to know the students.

"Taking Charge: Techniques for Developing Self-Directed Learners." Greg Donaldson's goal is to provide his reading students with the tools to become proficient, independent readers.

"The ABCs of ESL: Developing Literacy." Helen Jarandillo takes her class of newly literate ESL students through the process of acquiring survival skills in English.

"Listen, Ask and Answer: Enhancing Aural Ability and Oral Facility." Cliff Meyers leads his ESL class through a real-life listening comprehension activity, a student-centered drill and the creation of a group-generated composition.

"Actively Interactive: Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies." Oliver Patterson teaches a reading comprehension lesson that connects his ABE students' previous experiences with their reading.

"Sound, Form and Fluency: Refining Oral Skills." Rita Pavloff leads her ESL class through a variety of student-centered conversation and pronunciation activities.

"From Real Life: Using Student Experiences in Reading and Writing." Dannette Queen elicits her ABE students' own language and uses it to develop reading and writing activities.

"Speak Up/Speak Out: Strategies for Developing Oral Fluency." Dan Rabideau and Kathleen Tracy demonstrate three different

techniques for helping ESL students improve their English conversation skills.

"Anatomy of a Lesson: Pacing and Structure in the Basic Education Classroom." Kay Sardo demonstrates the structure of a student-centered classroom in which students share the responsibility for their own learning.

THE MATERIALS

Each lesson is accompanied by a viewer's guide and a written summary highlighting the approach and techniques demonstrated on the tape. Also included is a workshop leader's guide that can be used in staff development with groups of teachers.

Funding for this project was provided by the Office of the Mayor of the City of New York, Office of Youth Services; the New York State Education Department, Office of Continuing Education and the City University of New York.

Teacher to Teacher is a co-production of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York.

For further information, please call or write

Teacher to Teacher
Office of Academic Affairs
City University of New York
535 E. 80th Street
New York, New York 10021
(212) 794-5429

PROFESSIONALIZATION

(continued from page 11)

teaching reading and writing to adults. Our work is here to stay. We need the respect, the infrastructure, and the resources to help us try to do it right.

For copies of the report entitled *Professionalization of the Adult Literacy Workforce* by Susan E. Foster, contact:

The Project on Adult Literacy
440 First STreet NW, Suite 415
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 783-7058

DEMONSTRATION

(continued from page 12)

presented in a structured manner and geared for easy adaptation are best. It is important to keep the activities and environment in a familiar context. Teachers can work to expand their style of teaching rather than re-create it.

2) Consider the environment. The demonstration should relate to the previous lessons or course outline and the teacher must communicate this with the staff developer beforehand. It is also important for the staff developer to work with the resources available to the teacher. If the teacher has a tape recorder and a blackboard in the classroom, for example, those are the tools that should be used in the demonstration, perhaps using them in new ways.

3) Schedule time for discussion. It is essential that follow-up discussion be scheduled as soon after the demonstration as possible, as it is often the most productive part. Not only can the observation questions be discussed, but questions, reactions, confusion and interpretations of both the teacher and developer can be shared. This greatly increases the chance for growth for all involved.

Any teacher who wishes to observe a CUNY Basic Education or ESL demonstration class is invited to do so. Please call Cliff Meyers or Linda Brown at (212) 967-1917 to arrange for a visit.

CLEARINGHOUSE HOURS:

Wednesdays: 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
First Saturday of each month:
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Other times by appointment

For information, call:
Dan Rabideau or Sara Hill at
(212) 267-5309

The LAC Clearinghouse: It's more than just a bunch of books.

by Dan Rabideau

The Clearinghouse, far from being just a "bunch of books" available for use by literacy practitioners, is a rich and valuable source of information on the processes of literacy development and language acquisition.

The Clearinghouse is a lending library of instructional materials and professional books related to Basic Education and ESOL. It also contains videos and instructional software, professional journals and publishers' catalogues. Another significant component of the Clearinghouse is an annotated collection of unpublished papers, articles from professional journals, bibliographies, workshop handouts and teacher-made instructional materials all relating directly or indirectly to literacy and language acquisition.

The philosophy behind the collection is that the curriculum for a BE or ESOL class is not found in a single textbook. Rather, literacy development and language acquisition are processes; students become better readers and writers by reading a variety of books and by doing real writing. Students become better speakers of a language by using that language to communicate their own ideas. We want to find books that beginning readers can handle, but reading level is not the only consideration for book selection. We want to find books that respond to the affective needs of beginning readers as well. We need to turn them on to reading, let them know that reading is pleasurable and informative -- it is a communication of ideas that confirm or challenge our view of the world.

We try to find more than the standard "adult beginning reader" kinds of books, although there are a growing number of well written books for adult beginning readers. In the class I teach, one student borrowed the book *Our Bodies Ourselves*, a book on health issues written for young women. She took the book home and read it with her daughter. She talked about how it opened a conversation between her and her daughter about sexuality and self-esteem. The key is that students develop reading fluency when they are presented with books that contain real information that answers *their* questions. Writing is another discipline that doesn't lend itself well to textbook instruction. Writers need an audience, and textbooks don't provide that. A student working in a community of writers might learn to look critically at her own writing. "Does it communicate what I want to say?" And most importantly, that student might learn that writing is a tool for looking at her own life to reflect on the events in her life and the decisions she has taken. I would suggest that the students who contributed to the last issue of *Information Update* found that writing is a lot more than spelling and paragraphing. Rather it is a tool that we use to know ourselves and let others know us.

A teacher who comes into the Clearinghouse looking for material on writing instruction will likely look at samples of student writing, get involved in a discussion of writing process, the kinds of questions we might use to help students to revise a piece of writing, and how skills are taught in the context of real writing.

Who uses the Clearinghouse?

We tend to think of the ABE community in New York in terms of the funded Literacy Providing Agencies, but in fact, a lot of other folks are involved in this work. A minister from a church in Brooklyn has an ESL class for his parishioners on Sunday evenings. A probation officer who works with young people wants to start a reading and writing group for some of his kids. A high school teacher is looking for high interest low readability materials for some 16 year-old beginning readers. Many of these people find out about us just because Literacy Assistance Center happens to come before Literacy Volunteers in the phone book. The Clearinghouse is a resource where all people involved in teaching reading, writing, and ESOL instruction can get information about how to make instruction more effective.

But the majority of utilization comes from the more traditional funded agencies. A

new program is funded and the teachers and program manager schedule an appointment to look at instructional materials. We talk about who their students are, appropriate instructional strategies, and we look at the variety of books available to them. We dig out publishers' catalogues for the books that they think might be good. When materials budgets are limited, I suggest that they borrow student books before ordering them to find out which books the students are interested in reading. Since we have a limited number of copies of each title, I give them a brochure from the library literacy program which is geographically closest to them. At the library, practitioners can borrow multiple copies (a deposit collection) of books for a whole semester.

Clearinghouse use is not limited to new teachers working with beginning readers or ESL students for the first time. Frequently, being in the field for a long time means we have more questions than answers. It is exciting to see experienced teachers looking at the professional collection and journals trying to find answers to some of those questions. Some teachers involved in staff development and teacher training come in to use the collection of workshop handouts and professional articles when preparing their own presentations. These teachers are very generous with the materials that they develop, and as they continue to share their work, that part of the Clearinghouse collection will continue to grow.

How does the Clearinghouse Work?

The Clearinghouse has regularly scheduled hours on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. and the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. When those hours are not convenient for teachers, we try to arrange visits at other times by appointment. LAC staff members are available to help teachers find what they are looking for, but people are also invited to come in and browse. Instructional materials and professional books can be borrowed for 60 days. Videotapes can be borrowed for a week. Computer software cannot be borrowed, but it is available for demonstration.

Where does the Clearinghouse fall short?

The limitations of the Clearinghouse collection reflect, to a great extent, the problems in the field. Practitioners typically have very few hours for their own professional development. There are few, if any, good assessment instruments, or documented assessment procedures. Models of good curricula that reflect learners' needs and the instructional philosophy of individual programs are hard to come by.

Although we have a long way to go, we are beginning to respond to some of the problems. There are more full-time positions than ever before. Increasingly, teachers have paid time to get together to work on special projects or in institutes, and the Clearinghouse resources help them in their projects. Clearly, more of this kind of professional development opportunity is needed.

Discussion about assessment reflects a higher level of sophistication than before. Practitioners are beginning to explore alternatives to standardized tests. As they document their work, we will make it available to Clearinghouse users.

We have the beginnings of a collection of teacher and student-developed materials. The LAC mini-grants (see *Information Update*. Vol. 5, Num. 2) have enabled many practitioners to develop study units, and to disseminate their work. Funding more of these projects will improve instruction in the field by giving teachers a forum in which to think about their work, and a way to develop products that will be used by others.

Finally, I think many of us ignore math instruction or we tend to tack it on to the regular reading and writing curriculum. The collection of math materials in the Clearinghouse consists mostly of workbooks. We need to devote more work to the role of math instruction in BE programs. As that dialogue develops, I think we will find that the answer is not in a set of books, but in the development of processes and instructional strategies that can be shared with practitioners throughout the field.

Staff Development Questionnaire

A group representing literacy providers and funders of the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative has been meeting at the Literacy Assistance Center to talk about staff development needs and concerns of literacy practitioners. In order to assist the group in its planning and coordination efforts, we thought it would be helpful to learn more about practitioners: what your experience is; what training you have had; your availability for staff development, and what you consider your staff development needs to be. The greater the response from you, the more relevant our planning of staff development activities will be.

If you work outside of the New York City literacy community, please check here: _____.

1. Where do you work? (Please check all which apply)
   CBO ___ library __ BOE (Adult Ed)___ BOE (Elem. & Second. Ed)_____
   CUNY ___ other _____

2. What position(s) do you hold in the program(s)? (Please check all which apply.)
   ___ teacher of BE, ESOL, BENL, GED (circle all which apply)
   ___ tutor of BE, ESOL, BENL, GED (circle all which apply)
   ___ administrator/coordinator
   ___ counselor
   ___ other (please describe) _____

3. Is this a paid position? ___ yes ___ no

4. How long have you been in your current position(s)?
   Position title _____ Mos. _____ Yrs. _____
   Position title _____ Mos. _____ Yrs. _____

5. Have you had previous work experience in adult literacy? ___ Yes ___ No
   If yes, what have you done? _____

6. How long have you worked in **adult literacy** altogether?
   ___ less than six months
   ___ six months - one year
   ___ one - two years
   ___ two - five years
   ___ more than five years

   In terms of time, what sort of **adult literacy** positions do you now hold? (Please check the one that most accurately reflects your situation.)
   ___ one full-time position
   ___ one full-time position plus something else
   ___ part-time position(s) less than 21 hours
   ___ part-time position(s) 21 hours or more
   ___ two or more part-time positions equivalent to full-time or more

8. What types of training have you received to help you prepare for your current position(s)? (Please check all that apply.)
   ___ courses in your field

___ on-site in-service training
___ workshops and conferences
___ tutor training workshops
___ higher degrees (A.A., B.A., M.A./M.Ed., Ph.D.) in education, your field or related area.
Indicate area_____
___ other (please describe) _____

9. Do you feel you need more professional development?
___ Yes ___ No
If yes, what would you like to learn more about?
(Please check as many as apply.)

___ assessment
___ learning differences and disabilities
___ student-centered curriculum development
___ materials acquisition and development
___ the use of technology
___ program management
___ fundraising
___ counseling issues
___ teaching methods
___ philosophy of education
___ the process of teaching and learning
___ other (please describe) _____

10. What kind of staff development format would best fit your schedule?

___ on-site visit
___ mini-course
___ 1-day workshop
___ college course
___ other (please describe) _____

11. If you had to identify one important area to be researched in the field of adult literacy, what would you want to look at? _____

_____

_____

Please return completed questionnaire by April 30 to:

Mae Dick
Literacy Assistance Center
15 Dutch Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Editorial *(continued from page 2)*

will need to redefine the traditional definition of full-time employment in light of the need for classes in the mornings and evenings. But that should not prevent us from making the resource commitment toward full-time jobs and decent health coverage for those who are committed to teaching.

The connection between staff development and teaching conditions has not gone unnoticed by our contributors to this issue, and you will note threads of this theme in a number of the articles included here.

In the first piece, Karen Griswold provides "snapshots" of staff development experiences she has had working in three separate literacy programs in New York City. She then culls these experiences into what she considers to be "elements of effective staff development." She cautions her readers, however, that the kind of interchange she experienced with her colleagues was possible in part because there were a number of full-time staff who could afford to meet regularly over a period of time. In reflecting on the connection between staff development and full-time employment, Karen makes the all too often forgotten observation, "that a commitment to teachers is in a real sense a commitment to students."

In an interview conducted by Joan Pleune of the LAC staff, Phyllis Berman and Leslie Robbins, co-directors of the Riverside Adult Learning Center, describe an integrated and comprehensive staff development model they have forged in a program which has both full and part-time staff and operates at many sites. Their model reflects a strong commitment to development of *all* staff, not just teachers, employs long term and thoughtful planning, and recognizes that funding is an essential ingredient of staff training.

Moving away from an individual program model, Deidre Freeman of The Consortium for Worker Education, ILGWU, comments on her experience in the LAC's June 1988 ESOL Institute and the year-long Follow-Up Plan she and other Institute participants are involved in. As part of the Follow-Up Plan, Institute participants, each paired with an experienced "partner-teacher," will have attended two full-day workshops and shared in 6 classroom observations over the course of the year. Deidre's reflections come in the form of a letter to me and Phyllis Berman (consultant to the Institute and Follow-up Plan).

We shift gears at this point to hear from Linda Brown, a basic education teacher and staff developer for the City University of New York's Adult Literacy Program. Linda has long been an advocate for adult literacy teachers, and in her examination of the Southport Institute's report on *Professionalization of the Adult Literacy Workforce*, she makes a powerful argument for practitioners to rally in support of the infrastructure and resources necessary for the creation of an adult literacy profession.

Demonstration classes have long proven their effectiveness in helping both experienced and inexperienced teachers improve their practice. Cliff Meyers, the ESOL staff developer for CUNY's Adult Literacy Program, describes how demonstration classes provide a "unique opportunity... to observe teaching techniques, student/teacher interaction, materials usage, classroom management, and teaching style."

Leslee Oppenheim of CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs has extended the concept of demonstration classes by developing a 12-part video tape series of adult literacy teachers presenting various approaches to teaching Basic Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages. A brief review of each of the tapes appears in this issue.

Having ready access to instructional materials and the opportunity to talk with experienced practitioners about the processes of language acquisition and literacy development are primary to the focus of the Literacy Assistance Center's Clearinghouse service. Dan Rabideau, the Clearinghouse Coordinator, explains why this rich and valuable resource is "more than just a bunch of books."

The rapid expansion of adult literacy services in New York City has made it difficult for the field to keep pace with the need for qualified and experienced professionals. In this issue, John Garvey provides a brief description of the City University's task force which has been convened to examine existing preparatory programs, and to explore possible responses CUNY might make to address this need.

In concluding this special issue, we ask that you complete the questionnaire on staff development. It will help us obtain more information on literacy practitioners and what their staff development needs and concerns are. If we receive a significant response, we will publish the results.

I wish to thank the staff of the Program Services Unit, particularly Joan Pleune, for their assistance in the preparation and editing of the newsletter.

LITERACY FELLOWS INTERNSHIP

The Literacy Assistance Center has received a grant from the Aaron Diamond Foundation to provide a year-long and part-time internship for 20 BE and ESOL teachers to examine literacy research, theory and practice. Planning for the project is underway. Applications will be available this summer and the internship will begin in September, 1989. For more information, contact Sara Hill at the LAC.

Literacy Practitioner Preparation Task Force
Sponsored by CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs

One of the most urgent needs of literacy programs across the city is the need to increase the number of professionally trained literacy instructors. Because of the historic lack of funding of literacy programs, and the part-time nature of most program positions, only a small cadre of teachers have chosen careers in the literacy field. For years, this committed group was sufficient to fill the small number of positions available. Today, though, the situation has changed. Although positions remain largely part-time, the extensive demand for literacy education and the rapid expansion of literacy programs have resulted in a critical need for trained and experienced literacy professionals. In addition, for those working in the field, opportunities for professional development are fragmented and often do not support career advancement. To address this situation, the Office of Academic Affairs of the City University of New York, with the support of the Aaron Diamond Foundation, has established a Task Force on the Preparation of Literacy Practitioners. The Task Force is composed of representatives of the adult literacy communities in New York City and New York State.

The work of the Task Force will include a thorough review of the current state of literacy practitioner training, an exploration of a variety of possible University responses and the preparation of formal recommendations regarding appropriate next steps.

The *Information Update* is the quarterly newsletter of the Literacy Assistance Center. The Center also publishes a monthly Calendar which provides readers with information on employment opportunities, upcoming events and funding possibilities.

Funding for the newsletter and calendar is provided by the New York City Youth Bureau and the Adult Literacy Initiative of the City of New York.

Subscriptions are free. If interested, please send name and address to:
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